

REMARKS

The Applicant acknowledges that the Examiner was unable to consider references Y-GG in Applicants Information Disclosure Statement because the Applicant could not provide dates to these references. The Applicant has thus resubmitted these documents listing assumed dates that are earlier than the filing date of the present application. The Applicant is providing these dates so that the Examiner will consider the references.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 as being anticipated by Pickard (5,403,637). In response to this rejection, the Applicant has amended independent claim 1 and submits that independent claim 1 and its dependant claims are patentable over the Pickard reference and the remaining prior art references.

In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that each of the floor mats includes a plurality of spaced upper ribs disposed across a plurality of spaced lower ribs to define a plurality of flow-through openings. These flow-through openings allow debris and water to flow through the floor mat providing a clean surface to those walking over the floor mat. The flow-through openings and rib structure of the floor mat combined with the material that is used to fabricate the ribs provides a flexible floor mat that has required framing structures to retain their positions in the past. Independent claim 1 is directed to an arrangement where the flexible flow-through floor mats are disposed in an abutting relationship as depicted in Figs. 25 and 26 with only clips disposed at the corners of the floor mats holding the relative position of the floor mats with respect to each other. The Pickard reference is not a flow-through floor mat because it includes a continuous planar upper side (12). Column 2, line 32. The Pickard reference also lacks the upper and lower ribs recited in independent claim 1. In view of these amendments to independent claim 1, the Applicant submits that newly amended independent claim 1 recites patentable subject matter and is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-11 under the judicially created Doctrine of Obviousness-Type Double Patenting as being unpatentable over the claims of 8-14 of US patent 6,531,203 in combination with Pickard '637. The Applicant is submitting a Terminal Disclaimer that obviates this rejection. The Applicant thus submits that claims 4-11 are in condition for allowance.

The Applicant has added new claims 17-21 and respectfully requests these claims to be examined.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims and most earnestly solicits the issuance of a formal notice of allowability for the claims. If any issues remain after this amendment, please call Fred H. Zollinger, III at (330) 244-1174.

Respectfully submitted at Canton, Ohio this 5th day of August, 2003.

SAND & SEBOLT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred H. Zollinger, III', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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